


State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 7e
July 19, 2012

Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

TO: Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner 

RE: Renewal of the Paul Cuffee School's Charter by the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education

The charter of the Paul Cuffee Charter School expires at the conclusion of the 2012-13 school year. In accordance with the Board of Regents' Regulations Governing Public Charter Schools C-4-3, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) coordinated the process of evaluating Paul Cuffee's performance over the past two years to determine the merits of charter renewal (the school was given a 3-year extension to their charter in 2010).

Review Process

- RIDE's rigorous evaluation of charter school performance is guided by three questions:
 - Is the school's educational program an academic success?
 - Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for academic success?
 - Is the school a viable organization?

The first portion of the review – is the school's educational program an academic success? – considers all relevant student outcome measures, including Math and ELA NECAP performance, IDEA SPP indicators, federal Adequate Yearly Progress designations, and, if applicable, ACCESS proficiency and graduation rates.

The second portion of the review – is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success? – gauges the quality of instructional leadership, classroom instruction, and curriculum development and implementation at each school relative to the standards set forth in the Board of Regent's Basic Education Program (BEP). Evidence for this portion of the review is gathered through a three-day site visit and thorough document review.

The third portion of the review – is the school a viable organization? – considers whether or not schools are using public funds responsibly and appropriately. RIDE staff reviews each school’s financial audits over the course of the charter term as well as all other relevant documentation on the school’s compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

- The school was required to complete a renewal application. This application provides an opportunity: (1) to present any important new or supplemental information pertaining to the above guiding questions, to enable a more comprehensive assessment of school performance; and (2) to articulate the school’s strategies and capacities for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term.

Key Findings

- Paul Cuffee School’s educational program has been successful. The school has consistently exceeded their sending districts and similar schools in reading and math [See Attachment 1]. The school’s student growth percentiles (SGP) as reflected in Rhode Island’s Growth Model show above average student growth [See Attachment 2].
- Paul Cuffee is providing many of the key appropriate conditions for success. Our review indicates that the school has many of the internal systems and structures to measurably improve achievement of its students:
 - Overall, the site visit team found the Paul Cuffee School’s leadership to be strong. The school’s administration is focused on student learning and engages in reflective practices that reinforce that focus. The school’s leadership has developed a clear instructional philosophy that was consistently implemented as observed;
 - The school exceeds the standard in the following areas: community and family engagement and data-driven interventions for its students; and
 - The visit team found the following areas in need of improvement: 1) the board’s process for establishing standards for student learning and continuous improvement evaluation of the school leader; and 2) administrative oversight of fiscal policy implementation.
- For each of the previous fiscal years audited, Paul Cuffee Charter School has received an opinion from its auditor that states that the school’s financial reports meet generally accepted accounting principles and fairly represent the financial position of the school.

THEREFORE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education move to renew the charter of the Paul Cuffee Charter School for a five (5) year term, to operate in accordance with the attached renewed Charter from the 2013-2014 school year to the 2017-2018 school year. To be eligible for future charter renewal, the school must demonstrate overall success by:

- attaining student achievement goals as defined by the Charter Performance Review Handbook;**
- demonstrating the management and leadership necessary to establish a thriving, financially viable charter public school as defined by the organizational performance goals in the Charter Performance Review Handbook; and**
- ensuring that all operational elements of the school meet statutory and regulatory guidelines.**

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Attachment 1:

Student Performance Relative to Sending District and Similar Schools

Paul Cuffee School			
		2009-2010 TcY	2010-2011 TcY
Proficiency Level	Reading	70.8%	77.1%
	Math	61.4%	63.6%
1.1 Sending District	Reading	Above Typical	Above Typical
	Math	Above Typical	Above Typical
1.2 Similar Schools	Reading	Above Typical	Above Typical
	Math	Above Typical	Above Typical
1.3 Growth	Reading	N/A	Typical
	Math	N/A	Above Typical
1.5 AYP		Met	Met

Proficiency Level = Paul Cuffee School Proficiency Levels

Sending District = A weighted average of a school's sending district(s)' proficiency levels. Paul Cuffee draws students from Providence.

Similar Schools = An estimate of the proficiency level of Rhode Island schools with similar numbers of ELL, SPED, and FRPL students as Paul Cuffee.

Please see *Charter Performance Handbook* for explanation of Sending District and Similar School measurements.

Appendix 2.1

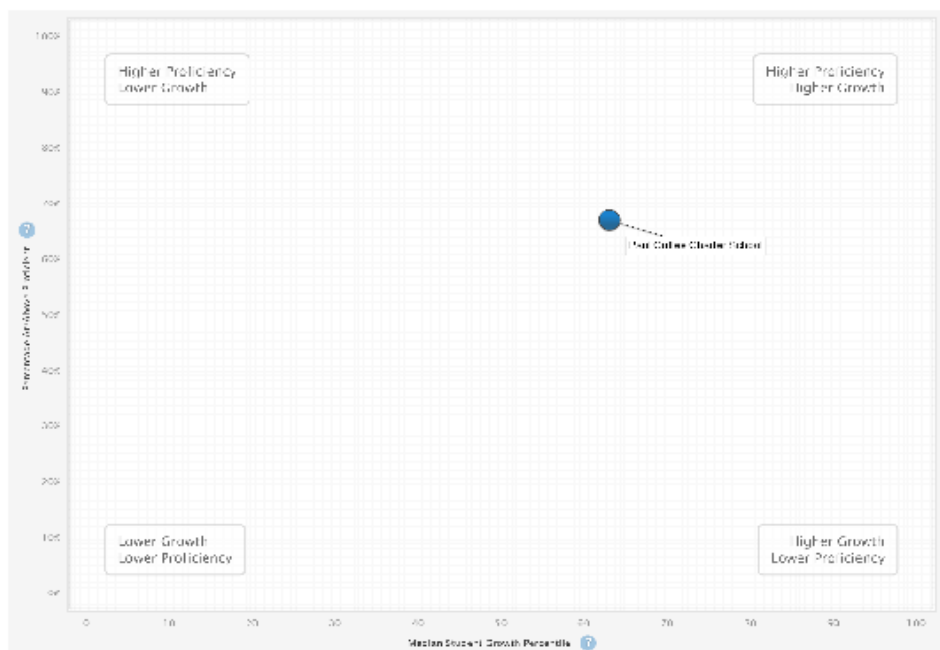
Student Growth Model—Math



Rhode Island Growth Model

2012 Paul Cuffee Charter Sch, By School

Math



Interact and explore data at
[Rhode Island Growth Model](#)

Appendix 2.2

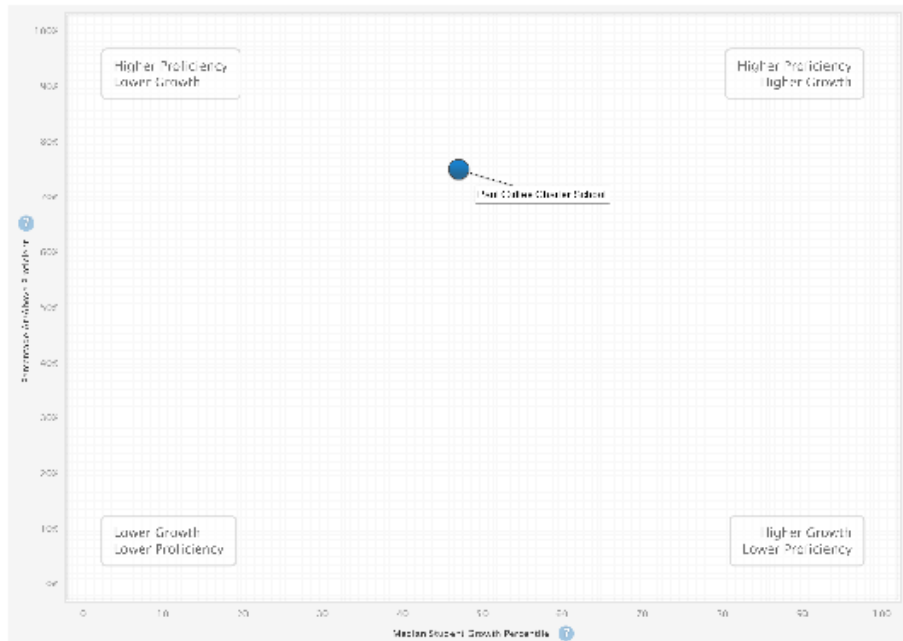
Student Growth Model—Reading



Rhode Island Growth Model

2012 Paul Cuffee Charter Sch, By School

Reading



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